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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 8 August 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to inform the Assembly that Ghana has decided to present its candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for the term 2015 to 2017, at the elections to be held during the sixty-ninth session of the Assembly, in November 2014.

In accordance with resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, an aide-memoire of the achievements, voluntary pledges and commitments of Ghana towards the universal promotion and protection of human rights is attached.

* A/69/150.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 8 August 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Ghana to the Human Rights Council, 2015-2017

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to resolution 60/251

Membership of Ghana in the Human Rights Council

1. Since the establishment of the Human Rights Council, Ghana has participated actively in its debates and activities, thereby contributing effectively to the Council's collaborative effort to build the consensus necessary for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

2. Ghana consistently subscribes to the principle of non-politicization and objectivity in the work of the Council and believes that the Council should continue to endeavour to focus on the enhancement of international cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights.

3. As a member of the Council for two terms, from 2007 to 2012, Ghana articulated and pursued the interests of victims of human rights abuses around the world. Ghana currently co-sponsors a number of resolutions either individually or through the African Group, such as the resolutions on the rights of girls to education, the prevention of violence against women or child, early and forced marriage.

International commitments

4. Ghana was among the first members of the African Union to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism to be peer-reviewed. In the same vein, it welcomed the system of universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council and was included in the second cycle of the review in 2012. Ghana is gradually but steadily implementing the various recommendations it accepted during the first and second cycles of reviews.

5. Ghana has issued standing invitations to all special procedures mandate holders. Among those who have visited Ghana over the past two years are: the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences; the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises; and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Special Rapporteur on torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment visited Ghana in November 2013 and submitted his report at the twenty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, in March 2014. The Ghana Prisons Service is coordinating an inter-agency task force on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur relating to the conditions of places of detention in Ghana. Ghana is also considering a request by the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

6. Ghana is party to key international human rights instruments, including:

- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

7. Ghana has also signed the following:

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- The Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity
- The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Other human rights instruments of the Organization of African Unity and the African Union, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplemental Protocols, namely the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish

Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air

- The Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts of 12 August 1949 and its additional Protocol relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Additional Protocol I) and Protocol relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts (Protocol II)

Human rights at the national level

8. The Government of Ghana is fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. In consonance with that commitment, the Constitution of 1992 of the Republic of Ghana has a provision on fundamental human rights and freedom in its chapter 5, article 33 (5), which states:

> The rights, duties, declarations and guarantees relating to the fundamental human rights and freedoms specifically mentioned in this chapter shall not be regarded as excluding others not specifically mentioned which are considered to be inherent in a democracy and intended to secure the freedom and dignity of man.

9. The Constitution of Ghana also guarantees respect for the economic, cultural and social rights of citizens. In this spirit, Ghana has enacted and implemented pieces of legislation and adopted a variety of measures concerning the promotion and protection of human rights to foster the rule of law, good governance and political tolerance in its practice of democracy.

10. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, a constitutional body monitoring human rights, dealing with violations and educating the public on human rights, has been established as an autonomous and independent national human rights institution in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission has adopted a national plan of action for human rights endorsed by parliament. It also publishes an annual report to create awareness of its activities.

11. Ghana is committed and responding to calls to implement the Declaration contained in the document entitled "A world fit for children" and the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children. Policies related to early childhood development, HIV and AIDS and to orphans and vulnerable children have been developed and community-based organizations working on HIV and AIDS have been trained and equipped with skills to respond to the specific needs of children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Ghana cooperates closely with international organizations, including the GAVI Alliance, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to address the scourge of malaria.

12. Ghana has achieved some of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular reducing poverty by half.

13. Besides the adoption of the Human Trafficking Act in 2005 and a comprehensive national plan of action to implement the legislation, Ghana has also joined international agreements and concluded bilateral cooperation agreements

with neighbouring countries to combat international trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

14. In recognition of the fact that violence against women undermines women's empowerment, the Government of Ghana has for many years remained committed to addressing the issue of violence and discrimination against women and ensuring equal rights for women in all fields of endeavour in Ghana. To this end, Ghana co-sponsored the Human Rights Council resolutions on violence against women and on the right of girls to education at the twenty-sixth session of the Council in Geneva.

15. The Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service continues to play an active role in addressing domestic violence since the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act of 2007.

16. The environment in Ghana promotes, protects and encourages the work of human rights defenders, journalists, civil society and the independence of judges and lawyers.

17. Over the past decades, Ghana has cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to address the refugee situation resulting from armed conflicts in Africa, in particular West Africa, and fulfilled its obligations in respect of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Ghana and human rights in the future

18. The Government of Ghana reiterates its long-standing resolve to cooperate with the international community and all stakeholders to promote and protect human rights globally through constructive dialogue and a consensus-based approach. Ghana therefore voluntarily commits itself to the following:

- To continue to participate actively in the work of the Human Rights Council
- To continue to strengthen policies for the advancement of women to eliminate laws that discriminate against women
- To advance and protect the rights and welfare of children with their best interest as the paramount consideration
- To maintain a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders
- To continue to cooperate fully with United Nations human rights treaty bodies and promptly submit its periodic reports to those bodies
- To strengthen the Council to enable it to achieve its aims and objectives
- To ensure that Ghana becomes party to all core human rights instruments and to implement its human rights treaty obligations